

## Fun Facts about Medieval English food

### 1. The grain that was eaten most in the Middle Ages was:

-Wheat

-Oats

-Barley: *Barley was widely eaten by the lower classes in everything from potage (a porridge-like soup) to beer, which was more often safer to drink than water.*

-Rye

### 2. What led to the introduction of better foods to the poorer classes?

-The Black Death: *So many people died of the Bubonic Plague that there was suddenly a lot of food available, so peasants had access to foods such as wheat and meat, where before they were only available to the wealthy.*

-Refrigeration

-Invention of Tractors

-A law which outlined a new food pyramid

### 3. Medieval food used lots of spices. They helped preserve food and mask any spoiled tastes.

**But unfortunately, they were very expensive, since many of them came all the way from:**

-Mexico

-Antarctica

-India: *Travel to Eastern lands by ship led to the introduction of new foods and flavors. Of course, sea-travel was expensive and dangerous, so spices were often considered luxury items.*

-Portugal

### 4. True or False:

**Almond milk was a popular drink and ingredient**

True: *Almonds were used for many dishes. Almonds grow on the European continent.*

**5. Did you know... “In one early 15th century English aristocratic household for which detailed records are available (that of the Earl of Warwick), gentle members of the household received staggering 3.8 lbs of assorted meats in a typical meat meal in the fall and 2.4 lbs in the winter, in addition to 0.9 lbs of bread and 1/4 gallon of beer or possibly wine (and there would have been two meat meals per day, five days a week, except during Lent.)”**

Hicks, Michael A., *Revolution and consumption in late medieval England*, Boydell & Brewer, 2001

### **5. How many meals were commonly eaten in the middle ages each day?**

-TWO: *Lunch and dinner were generally thought to be enough. It was considered weak minded to break the overnight fast too quickly after waking up, so most people (with the exception of children, the elderly and the ill) avoided breakfast.*

-THREE

-FOUR

-ONE

### **6. What is a trencher?**

-A hole in the ground used to store food

-A fork-like instrument used to shovel food into pig pens

-A system used to get rainwater off a roof

-A flat piece of bread: *Trenchers were an early version of plates- think breadbowls! The thick stew or meat would be laid on the flat piece of bread, and after the bread had soaked up all the juices from the main dish, it could be eaten too!*

### **7. Since sugar was expensive and rare, most people used what to satisfy their sweet tooth?**

-Splenda

-Honey

-Stevia

-Fruits: *Fruit, both fresh and dried, was less expensive and easier to get than honey or sugar, so it was used in many dishes where sweetness was desired.*

### **8. Which of the following was NOT eaten in the Middle Ages?**

-Whale

-Swan

-Corn: *Corn originated in the New World, so did not appear in Europe until later.*

-Peacock

-Quince

**9. Did you know... Medieval banquets often featured something called 'subtleties'. These were elaborate creations that combined food with something visually interesting. For example, the front end of a pig and the back end of a bird might be cooked and then placed on a platter to look like a completely different animal; this one was called a cockentrice. Or a huge pastry might be prepared which had a live juggler inside, who would pop out and start to perform when the pastry was cut open.**

**10: How many different dishes might be served at a medieval feast?**

-15

-36: *3 courses could be served with up to 12 dishes in each course!*

-7

-5

Sources:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval\\_cuisine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_cuisine)

<http://www.historyforkids.org/learn/medieval/food/index.htm>

Bhote, Tehmina. *Medieval Feasts and Banquets: Food, drink and celebration in the Middle Ages*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2004. Print.